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Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living



Fall Prevention

Falls jeopardize the health and independence of older adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), each year, one in every three adults age 65 or older fall. The chances of falling and being seriously injured in a fall increase with age. Falls can cause injuries such as hip fractures and head traumas.

Fear of falling can cause some people to limit their activities. This leads to loss of physical fitness and makes a person less able to get around well.

The good news is falls are preventable. Following are some tips to help lower your risk:

- **Exercise regularly.**
Exercise helps to build strength, balance, and endurance. Talk to your doctor about what type of exercise is best for you.
- **Ask your doctor or pharmacist about your medications.**
Medications or combinations of medications can increase your risk of falling. Educate yourself on your medications. Make a list of all of your medications including over the counter. Don't stop or change the



dosage without talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

- **Get an eye exam at least once per year.**
Poor vision increases the likely hood that you could stumble on uneven surfaces. People with vision problems are more than twice as likely to fall. Wear sunglasses to reduce glare outside. Stay still and let your eyes adjust when going from light to dark areas.
- **Eat a healthy diet.**
Eating a well balanced diet will help you stay healthy and independent. Consuming an adequate amount of calcium and vitamin D can keep your bones strong and help prevent fractures if you do fall.

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- ***Have walking aids properly fitted.***

If you use a walking aid, such as a cane or walker, be sure it has been fitted to you. Walking aids can help you maintain or improve your mobility if used correctly. Talk to your doctor about having it fitted and instructing you on how to use it safely.

- ***Wear sensible shoes.***

Make sure your shoes fit properly, have a no skid surface, and are sturdy.

- ***Make your home safer.***

- Clear walkways of cords, boxes, and papers.
- Remove all area rugs. Area rugs are very likely to make you trip.
- Add grab bars and stair rails where needed.
- Repair loose floorboards and carpeting.
- Store clothing, dishes, food and other necessities within easy reach.
- Keep your home brightly lit to avoid tripping on objects that are hard to see.
- Place night lights in your bedroom, bathroom and hallways.



For More Information:

- Falls Among Older Adults Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—
<http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/adultfalls.html>
- National Council on Aging—<http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/falls-prevention/>
- Kentucky Safety and Prevention Alignment Network (KSPAN) -
<http://safekentucky.org/> OR <http://www.nofalls.org/>

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